BL
240
B32

UC-NRLF

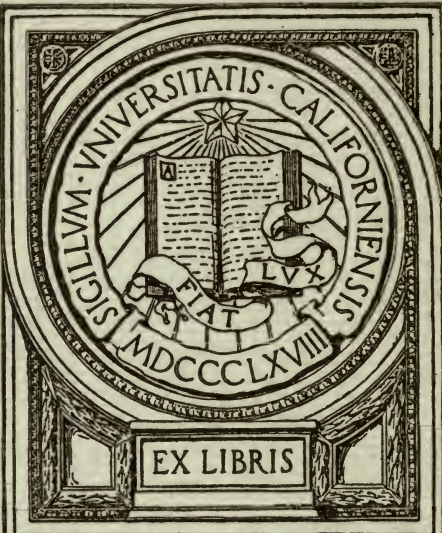
$B 45 386

3 ASCOM

BL240 B32

YC 31709

IN MEMORIAM
FLORIAN CAJORI



EX LIBRIS

Horace Cajori

The Natural and the Supernatural.

2
5

The Natural and the Supernatural.

A

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

DELIVERED TO THE GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN,

June 17th, 1883.

BY

JOHN BASCOM.

MILWAUKEE:
CRAMER, AIKENS & CRAMER, PRINTERS.
1883.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/naturalsupernatu00bascrich

BL 240
B32

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

Job, 32–18: *For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.*

The voluntary powers of men do not work like a finished machine, evenly and certainly, but fitfully and hesitatingly, like a machine not yet perfected. Two opposed tendencies, each of a faulty character, constantly arise in the use of our faculties. Men, instead of believing the truth and that only, believe either more than the truth or less than the truth, and find great difficulty in settling, in their convictions, due north, like the needle of an ideal compass. We shall escape this vacillating movement only as our powers become more obedient to the great currents of truth, and are less swayed by surrounding circumstances.

In religion this oscillating movement has reached in our time an unusually extreme character, and the point which divides affirmation from denial pertains to the natural and supernatural. This question, always an interesting one in religion, has now become the centre of belief and of unbelief, which, like the twins Esau and Jacob, struggle for priority. If we rightly understand terms, and confine the natural, as we should do, to the things and forces of the physical world, determinate in all their action,

R

while we designate as supernatural those flexible, changeable powers, by which spirit rises above matter, then this division is vital to religion. All that wars against the supernatural wars against religion. Religion finds a rational place in men's thoughts and conduct by virtue only of the supernatural; by virtue of powers both in man and in God which control nature. If there is no prevasive spiritual presence in the world, but only a bed-rock of physical law, all the duties and promises of religion are misdirected. Its alleged realm is only one more fanciful region peopled by malignant and by benevolent sprites of the imagination. All these creations must vanish before the clear daylight of knowledge. The controversy between faith and scepticism hinges here. Are there any supernatural elements in the world? Are we placed flatly, firmly down on naked physical facts and inflexible laws to settle our fortunes with them, or, rather, to have our fortunes settled by them? Or have we nobler incentives and the aid of higher powers wherewith to achieve our fortunes? We must first look a little more closely at these two terms in the make-up of the world—physical force and spiritual power—before we can pronounce between them, decide whose is the inheritance, or on what principles it is to be divided. The younger of the two conceptions, that of physical law, has entered a claim at the tribunal of reason for the entire estate, and has given a retaining fee to science. The older of the two ideas is setting up a defense, partly of possession, and partly of right,

with a wavering appeal to philosophy for aid. There is, in this strife, no disparagement either of science or of philosophy. They are two dogs of the same breed, growling and bristling over their respective treasures. Says science, setting forth the claim of its client: Everything, be it oxygen or iron, plant or man, is endowed with its own properties beyond all modification, increase or diminution. Each has its range of manifestations, according to the circumstances under which it is found; and though this range may be very extended, it is none the less settled in every portion of it. The essential idea of the world is, that it is fixed; that in itself it stands fast forever; that all its phases are merely passing manifestations of energies that are essentially unchangeable and indestructible. Fixedness, fate, the irrevocable, this is the rational force of things, and more and more so, as we distinctly understand them. Their exceedingly complex involutions and evolutions do not in the least soften this severe fact. A machine of one hundred wheels is no less a machine than one of ten wheels.

Nature taken by itself, has nothing to say, either of a beginning or an end; nothing to say about any change exterior to itself by which it has been made, or can be made, better or worse; by which it can be either held back from accomplishing what is in it, or pushed forward to do what is not in it. Everything is settled, finished, provided for, and the evolution of its forces and revolution of its wheels are things to be contemplated in silent awe and wonder.

All that mind can do with the simply natural, is to reflect it, as the lake reflects the heavens without having any part in their construction. With this work of reflection, presentation and explanation, thought is busy. If thought admits, for a moment, that anything is uncertain, vacillating, without law, that thing becomes to it at once a phantom, and no part of the substantial frame-work of things. This is bold language, and science utters it resoundingly, and finds itself infinitely magnified by its means. And well it may, for it expresses a very great truth, though not the entire truth.

Against this plea for the pervasive presence of physical law, which the authority of science seems at first sight to sustain, philosophy puts in a timid rejoinder. There are powers of comprehension and action in man that lie outside of physical forces, that are in reference to nature supernatural; by these he acts upon nature and controls it. He inquires into truth, he apprehends truth, he conceives a purpose, he shapes things towards that purpose. The consideration, the purpose and the pursuit are not themselves products of nature, are not the last stages of its own forces, but are the first stages of a truly independent life that rises above it. The natural is the plain, but the supernatural is the man that stands upon it, tills its fields, and plucks its fruits and reaps its harvests, and makes them all minister to a life of his own. The supernatural, therefore, involves a beginning and an end; a perpetual beginning and ending of many things, the springing up of pur-

poses, their accomplishment or their failure. Mental facts are no longer fixed, but flexible. Our spiritual life is not simply a complex combination of forces holding on their way between two eternities; it is a new energy other than and higher than all previous ones; it is supernatural. Words, as in this instance, win for themselves, in their happy use, a territory of thought with natural bounds of its own. They are not in their meanings like the limits of a farm, with fixed angles and arbitrary distances, but like those of a kingdom, which lie along water courses, skirt the ocean, or meet neighboring territory on a mountain ridge. It is important that we so define words as to conform to these natural distinctions which call for expression.

By the nature of a thing, we mean its qualities or methods of action, that which is fixed in it rather than that which is changeable. The most fixed things in the world are physical properties and energies, and these, therefore, are, in the strictest sense, natural; nature is made up of them as its first fundamental terms. While we may speak of the nature of man, and the nature God, and the nature of a miracle, we do it by license, not implying thereby the same settled constitution that we do in referring to the nature of the physical world. When we speak of nature pre-eminently, we mean the physical world, as the best example of that which is, through and through, thoroughly natural; that is, determinate in its qualities and settled in its interactions.

There is a higher nature, the spiritual and free

nature in man; and a still higher nature, the infinite and free nature of God. If we are to use the word supernatural in contrast with the natural, then man and God should go together as supernatural, not as lacking nature, but as not bound down to an inflexible and invariable nature. The contrast lies between a fixed nature on the one side, and a flexible or free one on the other.

This line of division holds not between nature and man on the one side and God on the other, but between physical action on the one side, and spiritual action on the other; between physical forces and rational activities. It is not a harsh figure to call, therefore, rational activities whether found in God or in man, supernatural; above the natural, because they are constantly occupied in overlooking and guiding the physical forces which lie, as it were, beneath them. The bounds of the two kingdoms are here. On the one side all things are fixed; on the other, all are fluent, moving forward toward the ultimate adjustments of reason. Here, then, we have made up an issue. Is man, in his higher powers, supernatural? If he is not, we have no sufficient proof of any supernatural term in the world. To assume one wholly beyond the world, still leaving man immersed in nature, dealing with nature, dealt with by nature, and wholly dependent on it, is not only to have a God a-far off, but so far off that it is quite useless to call upon him. Whether he is or is not, is a speculative inquiry of no practical interest, involving a fact of impossible affirmation. A Supreme

Presence that is to give redemption to man's thought must be a pervasive presence, a presence and power which man encounters in his daily life. That the supernatural, in the history of the human mind, has had deep hold upon it, none can deny. Men have believed the assertion that there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. They have felt at times, as Elihu felt: I am full of matter, and the spirit within me constraineth me.

Our present purpose is to maintain the validity of the supernatural, and to point out some of its relations to the natural. If there is properly a spirit in man, a spirit than can receive the inspiration of the Almighty, and not simply forces and laws, there is present in him and in the world, a supernatural power; and, having this fact, we have a right to inquire, What are the nature and extension of that power? We have, on this supposition, in the world two planes of activity, two centres of construction—matter and mind; and human history and human destiny are traceable only in their interaction.

The first consideration we offer in favor of this second term in human life is, that the experience of the race has actually been wrought out under a belief in its truth. This is a simple fact, about which there can be no doubt. The majority of men have believed in their own independent power, and their nobler actions especially have owed their existence to this belief. If, then, there is no supernatural element, human history, and that, too, in all its higher and

holier forms, its most typical and noble experiences, has been wrought out by the force of an illusion. What is this assertion but to say that the false and illusory have all the power, and more than the power of the true and of the genuine! Science would treat even the instincts of animals with more respect than this denial implies. A general and prolonged tendency in a race of animals establishes a constitutional force, and a constitutional force means an adaptation to existing facts—a real relation to some of the conditions of the environment.

If a constitutional force, like that which compels every one of us to believe daily that we have a real control over things, and to actually shape our lives under that conviction, has no sufficient foundation, or is something quite other than it seems to be, then nothing really valid or satisfactory is likely to be saved from the impressions that rule the human spirit; for none of them are more pervasive or pertinacious than this one. It is impossible for us to believe that our apprehension of the forces about us and our methods of using them, are a part and parcel of those very forces, and retain any coherent notion of human life.

But, in the second place, the natural is of no worth—has no rational significance without the supernatural. The fixedness in things, the firmness of physical laws, are simply an all-pervasive obstacle to rational action, an omnipresent dead-lock, if there is no mind which can both understand them and avail itself of them. Simply to know laws, with no

power to use them, to be ourselves only one of their innumerable expressions, this is to make knowledge the idle reflection of the mirror that alters nothing, and waits on time for its own destruction. The thing in its properties, the law in its fixedness, are intellectually significant only because they can be understood by mind above them, and be used by it. Understanding without use is an eye without any power of guidance—a glass-eye; an ear without direction—an ear-trumpet. These manifold reflections of thought, these multiplied reverberations of feeling, which make the human mind the great and solemn temple of life, they all perish in air, as mere shadows in a deserted sanctuary, if free powers do not truly follow with them and after them, to be and to build according to the spiritual material at hand. Mere necessity, mere fixedness, the merely natural, without the contrast of the spontaneous and the supernatural, are dead things, frozen things, to be left to themselves, like a polar zone. Both of these elements, the free and the fixed, must be saved, truly saved, not saved by an ingenious trick of words, if the world is to have any significance, is to be an arena of either thought or action, if truth is to differ from falsehood, right from wrong.

And this leads us to our conclusive reason; to banish the supernatural is suicidal to thought, and, therefore, cannot be done by thought. If thought is in any way, no matter in what way, obscurely and remotely, the product of physical forces, the distinction of the true and the false in thought is lost alto-

gether. Events are not true or false; they are all true, all real, for true means in this connection real. So would the most foolish judgments and illogical conclusions be real on the supposition that they are physical effects, and one just as real as another; precisely as sickness is a much a fact as health, and insanity as sanity. All opinions, no matter what they are, would rest back on sufficient physical causes, would be as necessary, one as another; as real, one as another; as true, one as another. To distinguish between them, therefore, as true or untrue, would be like an effort to distinguish between rocks and trees, or the images in water, or the actions of birds, as true or untrue. The distinction is no longer pertinent. There can be neither the true nor the false, save as there is mind moving freely as mind to recognize the division and maintain it as one inherent in its own action, its own conclusions, as logically correct or incorrect. If then, the law of truth is not present in the mind itself as incident to its free activity, that law is nowhere to be found, since it is not a law of facts as facts, but of thoughts as thoughts. It implies always that the mind may at any given time think correctly or incorrectly; an assertion not true of things or of forces, since but one possible movement at any given moment belongs to them. Truth, in reference to stones and birds and beasts, in reference to all physical things, is an unmeaning distinction. It always implies a spiritual presence, working from itself and for itself, a statement to itself of principles, correctly or incorrectly, under an inner

intellectual law. The reflection in a stream is not true or untrue; it may be like or unlike, complete or incomplete, but no logic can lay hold of it, no morality can attach to it. If, then, the mind denies the spiritual, the supernatural within itself, and falls back on fixed physical forces, its own denial loses all significance, as true or untrue, and becomes merely a fact among facts, like a headache or a lame foot or cross vision. Science, therefore, or any other advocate of the natural only, rules itself out of court when it presents its case at the tribunal of reason, for reason can only remain reason by remaining free—free to pursue the truth, free to state it, free to defend it. A science that professes that any opinion any man may entertain, is a simple fact with sufficient causes, has no position at the bar of reason.

Our conclusion is: first, that we must hold fast both the natural and the supernatural. Neither the world of thought nor the world of action can be carried on without them. Without fixed facts, definite causes and settled consequences, reason has nothing to inquire into, nothing to know. But reason itself must be left free in the inquiry; it must rise above the subject-matter of discussion; it cannot be one among the things fixed and settled by force, for force is not thought; nor events a search into events. Moreover, no possible advantage could ever arise from the discussions of reason, if forces are all-pervasive, and reason adds nothing to them, and alters nothing in them. On this supposition, our mental processes have no more to do with the progress of

events than have the shadows of the cars with the motion of the cars. The cars will move equally well with or without these shadows; so the inner physical forces, whose shadows are thoughts, are self-sufficient, and reason as a significant factor, disappears from the world.

No more can human action proceed without both of these terms, the fixed and the flexible. Nature, in its firm laws, is a quarry from which we take the stone for all our building. She is the hilt and the blade and the true edge of the sword which lies ready to our right hand. The hand is nothing if there is nothing which the hand can wield. How is it in dreams? The unsubstantial images come and go, and tickle us or torment us, with no control on our part. We are often glad to wake up to a fact, to something that can not and will not shift its physiognomy, nor change from angel to devil while we look at it. We know what these facts are, what nature is to the mind. It is something to stand upon, to work with, to help and to be helped by. Yet, if we were handed over to nature as an absolutely universal and fixed fact, we would be no better off.

If, in our dreams, all things are fluent and so beyond our shaping, on this supposition all things would be fast, and thus beyond our control. A world of adamant is too tough for our chiseling. No! We and nature must stand together face to face, each fully clothed with its own attributes, before that action and re-action can be opened which makes human history.

Thus only nature becomes a comprehensible term, a language between mind and mind, man and man, man and God. Now, language must mean something, and have its laws of interpretation, but it can not, in its meaning and laws, be independent of those who use it. While it has been shaped into many significant forms, it must be capable of being shaped into many more. It must lie between lip and lip, pen and pen, and take form as mind wills it. So lies nature between you and me, between us and God, with its many volumes of past thought, its volumes just now issued, and its immeasurable material for coming volumes. We cannot easily quit this image. The natural is to the supernatural what language is to thought. Take the letters and the lines, what are they? Nothing, save as the nimble thought, the radiant feeling have run along them and left them as a trail of light. One thing alone has no significance anywhere. The significance of the world lies in the interplay of two distinct things, matter and mind, the form and the indwelling spirit.

Our second conclusion is like our first. We may easily exaggerate either of these elements, the natural and the supernatural. The error of the past has been to exaggerate the supernatural. All things have offered themselves as perfectly pliant, either to the human will or the divine will, and so life has been a kind of a dream, a phantasmagoria, in which changeable images and fanciful influences have taken the place of things and forces and laws, and so prayer has gotten the upper hand of labor; fear and hope,

of counsel; and superstition, of reason. But this is not our present danger. The tide is now out, and has left, stranded and bare, these decaying hulks of fancy. The ocean has uncovered its slimy flats, and lodged its glutinous life in the sand, and the hot sun is evaporating it. The danger is with us, that the supernatural, the spiritual will dwindle and pale before the natural, till human life is swallowed up in the blinding whirl, the weary ongoing of physical things, and we open our eyes like sleepy children in the night, and soon close them again with no knowledge whence we came or whither we go.

Not till we wake up, not till we recover our own inner life, and find both the world and ourselves, are we able to shape conduct, to map out a course and to pursue it. The natural presents to us our problem and its limitations. The supernatural offers the powers by which we are to work it out. Here are the ocean and the boat; here the winds, the waves and the sails; we ourselves must stand at the helm.

One more conclusion is, that if there is this supernatural element in man himself, then there is both room for religion in the world, and a clear foreshadowing of its leading facts. Surely, man is not alone in the possession of these superior powers, nor is he the root of them. What the spirit of man is to his own body, moving with an intangible touch over all its chords, doing what it thinks to do, and bearing its own life into every part, that, we shall easily believe, we shall almost certainly believe, is the Divine Spirit to the world. We shall refuse to think that

this illumination about us comes from the alabaster itself, and not from the light behind it. We have not so understood the world thus far. Its inner meanings have all along enamored us, and now we know that light is from light, life from life, and the transparency between us and the Divine Spirit takes its true position and artistic relations.

It is a mistake, in these great questions, to decide them by their accidents and their secondary facts. Much discussion is expended on miracles. Ninety-nine are exploded and the one hundredth is denied, and there the controversy hangs. Other things must be settled first. Is there anywhere in nature a power above nature? Are there two sets of facts and laws, one of matter, one of mind, which do not measure each other, but stand over against each other in perpetual contrast and interaction? If we answer these questions in the negative, then certainly the miracle will wither away, for its root, the supernatural, has been cut off. If we answer them in the affirmative, then the cardinal, constructive terms of the universe contain the supernatural, and we are left by careful, quiet and leisurely inquiry to settle the limits of its activity, and the exact points at which it appears.

Even while law is interpreted in a very narrow way, as a fixed order of procedure in nature, it has, for some minds, a sacred, mystic force. Law is not ultimate; reason only is ultimate. Laws that are not each instant sustained by sufficient reasons, have for reason no inviolate authority. Laws are the products of reason, and are addressed to reason; reason

having shaped them as its own servants, does not abdicate in their favor. Laws sprang out of reason, and remain subject to reason in their entire course. If there is any unchangeableness, any fixedness, it is that of reason, not that of law. If laws are reasonable, they must certainly submit themselves to the claims of reason, and not lord it over reason.

But if it be said that reason, the Eternal Reason, is fixed, inflexible, infinitely firm, so may it equally well be said that reason, the Eternal Reason, is susceptible to every change of condition, and changes therewith. The one assertion is no more true than the other. If one pole of thought shows the firm, coherent lines of wise and unchangeable relations, the other pole equally reveals a minute and infinitely variable adaptation of special means to special ends. What are all the innumerable species in life everywhere but specific purposes fulfilled in a specific way? Evolution, movement forward, unfolding, belong pre-eminently to reason. When reason should cease to resolve itself into reasons in a thousand forms, at a thousand points, or when those reasons, each in their own order, should cease to be efficacious, the glory of reason would have departed; the universe would have halted, and be, at the very best, like a stationary sun, burning forever in the zenith.

The grace of God and his intervention, do not imply a suspension of reason; they imply only a new submission of all terms, physical laws included, to reason. They imply a presence of Power to which all things are permanently open, to which nothing

can oppose itself in the simple stubbornness of its own nature; a presence of Power from which all reasons, all thoughts, all feelings, may be poured out as the existing moral facts of the world. The present is built upon the past; it is not mortgaged to it; it is the growing fullness and freedom of all its processes. If there is any one thing which distinguishes the actions of mind from the movements of matter, rational affections from physical qualities, it is this very thing, that they envelope, like an atmosphere, the special facts before them, and respond to them in perfect sympathy. In God's dealings with us, both sets of attributes meet, the lower and the higher, the firm and the flexible, the remoteness of law and the nearness of love, the natural and the supernatural. In our anxiety to save the conditions of labor, let us not cast away that freedom of life for which only labor is of any worth.

We have but one other conclusion; the solution of the world is with us, not with the world. Bunyan was right. The castle of Giant Despair can be unlocked, for every man carries the key of its guards in his own bosom. This is true on the lower as on the higher plane. The impulses of intellectual and of spiritual growth are the same. Whatever may be our speculations, the practical results will be small unless we rest staunchly back on our own thoughts; unless we are able to make our own insight the centre of movement and basis of supply. It is not easy practically to have too much self-reliance, provided that it is accompanied by correspond-

ing diligence of inquiry and sense of responsibility.

Equally are the secrets of God with us in the spiritual kingdom. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. Out of this fellowship of thought, we have access to the divine thought; by these, our powers of control, we are made ready to obey. Sin is a betrayal of ourselves; so is unwise scepticism. Both dig down the foundations of personal strength; both allow mind to succumb to matter. In both, we hesitate, tremble; give way, before the physical forces that surround us. Man is not master, simply because he will not assert his mastery. God lets no man rule who is not ready to rule, who is not able to rule. Government is a thing of power, and when the mind feels itself, when it says comprehensively: there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding; I am full of matter, and the spirit within me constraineth me; then he does understand, does rule, and becomes aware of the currents of immortal life coursing through him.

Members of the Graduating Class: Among the subjects of common consideration and study, while you have been with us, none has been more interesting than the government of the world in its various grades of law. Things are controlled by forces; animals are directed by appetites; men are subject to ideas. It is some conception of the mind itself, some notion of that which is worth labor, that chiefly call

out human activity. These ideas, which go before the minds of men like guiding stars, become more and more forceful with every stage of civilization. If we could look into the minds of our neighbors, and see the conceptions which they cherish of the pleasurable, of the desirable and of the good, in human life, we should be at once able to map out their lines of labor.

These ideas, whose force we are all of us feeling—for not to feel them is to drop to the level of the brute—have a safe impelling and directing power, according to their scope and their beneficence. But no idea has more scope and more beneficence than this idea which we have to-day been presenting and enforcing—the conception of a supernatural power in ourselves, in our fellow-men, and in God, working concurrently toward a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom which wisdom and love shall preside over, bringing into subjection to themselves and sending forth for their own uses all the forces of nature. Hereby nature will find completion in grace, and grace find expression in nature, and so the two kingdoms, physical and spiritual, concur in this one kingdom—the kingdom of heaven. No idea, certainly, is of equal scope with this idea; no other idea has in it the same promise of good, or offers an equivalent stimulus to action. What immense changes a kindred, though subordinate idea, has wrought in this nation! How vigorous and constructive it has been, in a degree not before seen on the earth! Our forefathers conceived the notion of freedom, of

social action rooted in freedom of thought, and working patiently and reverently under a divine providence for the common weal or commonwealth, and, as the result of this idea, we have reached a degree and universality of prosperity hardly dreamed of before our time. Can this larger idea of a kingdom of grace, watched over of God, and labored for by all men for their common salvation, which, in its incipiency, has built up a nation like ours, fail in its fullness to construct a noble manhood and a noble society of men?

You are sure to have your ideas of life, and to feel their force, whatever those ideas may be. They may be those of honor, those of wealth, those of self-interest. If so, you, as others, will go swirling on like leaves in an Autumn blast. You may rise high in the air, and linger long and go far, but drop you will, and must, in due time, and take your place among things dead and decaying. There is no resurrection to such impulses. They are personal and perish with the person. He only falls, as seed falls into the fruitful soil, who holds in his thoughts the hopes of a kingdom, and has gathered his labors about a germinant idea. All that remains to us of any value from the past are steps of progress in this very direction; all that we can contribute to the future is still farther progress in this one path.

Let none of us think that we shall not be judged; we, from whose lips judgment proceeds with every breath. We judge all things. We scatter censure and praise, acquittal and condemnation, on every

side. We set up our tribunal in every home, and at every street corner. As we are full of judgment, so shall we be abundantly judged. Our neighbors will judge us; events will judge us; the truth of God will judge us; we shall ourselves sharply judge ourselves; and all these judgments will, more and more, concur in a searching and final award. The gist of our condemnation will be, if judgment for us is condemnation: Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these—the act of good-will—ye did it not unto me. No kingdom of God was in our thoughts, or in our actions, or in our hopes. But why should there not be such a kingdom? Is not society as a whole to become organic? Is it not to take to itself that which is organically obedient, and to cast out that which is disobedient? And what do sin and selfishness express but separation and disobedience; and holiness and love, but union and obedience? With what terrible energy does society, divinely ordained, from time to time, fling out from itself, clean over the brink of life, some criminal, irreconcilable with the common weal! This act is prophetic of that deeper, more thorough, more complete discrimination which society shall institute with advancing years, taking to itself that which is nutriment to its higher life, and casting from itself as refuse that which offers to it no ministration, either as spiritual food or as spiritual force.

We wish, exceedingly, that you, in whom our labors are now fulfilled, shall lead noble lives—lives profitable to others and so profitable to yourselves; lives

that shall be large partakers in human hopes. We believe that the productive ideas under which alone such lives can spring up are those of power and responsibility within yourselves, power and responsibility within society, a divine power and purpose working with men and for men, a supernatural pervasive of the natural, and shaping it to higher and holier ends. You have learned with us something concerning the natural; you have learned that you can make it minister to the supernatural, and now what we crave above all things as the completion of all things, is that you may hold within yourselves a clear and sufficient idea of that higher life which is hidden with Christ in God; that the light of this idea may reveal to you what to do, and how to do it in behalf of that kingdom of grace, which is being built with each advancing year.

As the eye of a friend is to us an open portal into his spiritual life, so may the gates of inspiration, and of knowledge and of insight that lie between the visible and the invisible stand ajar for you, flooding your minds with the light of years yet to be. Nature, the world, the universe, in their robes of beautiful, pure and priestly ministration, do but little for us, if they furnish food for the body merely. We stand in fitting union with nature only as we know something of its spirit of knowledge and its emotional life. If we attain to the beauty of the world, we have entered the fellowship of art; if we apprehend its truths, we belong to the sacred guild of science; if it bring to us a revelation of holiness, we are of the brotherhood

of religion ; if it blend for us the beautiful, the true and the good, in one overpowering vision, we have become the sons of God. But if our spirits are inwrapt neither with the beauty, nor the truth, nor the righteousness of the world, what part have we in it?

We have led you thus far. At this bound we part. But in doing so we commend you to the spirit of truth, the Divine Spirit, that makes the world the temple of God, and each human heart a shrine of worship. We would not leave you, full of hopes and fears and affections, to a purposeless, passionless, impersonal nature, but to a world pulsating in its every event with a Divine Life. May this life be to you as a shepherd to the flock, leading you forth and returning you in safety, enfolded and folded in the universe of God.